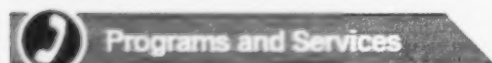




Navigation Path >> Home | Programs and Services

Tuesday, June 26, 2007



Farm and Food Report, Week of May 8, 2006

New Generation Elk Products Co-Operative Gets \$25,000 Grant | Researcher Looks For Ways To Improve Efficiency Of Starter Fertilizer | Trace Mineral Supplementation For Summer Grazing | Reminders And Tips For Successful Forage Crop Establishment | Saf Forage Specialist Wins Range Management Award

Week of May 8, 2006

NEW GENERATION ELK PRODUCTS CO-OPERATIVE GETS \$25,000 GRANT

Norelkco, the North American Natural Health Products Co-operative Ltd., is getting some business plan and market development activities support in the form of a \$25,000 grant from the Province of Saskatchewan.

The announcement was made recently by Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food Minister Mark Wartman at Norelkco's first annual general meeting in Saskatoon.

"We are grateful for the operational help this grant will provide," says David Altrogge, Marketing Manager for Norelkco Neutraceuticals. "It is always hard to generate that first revenue stream for a new company."

Norelkco Neutraceuticals was incorporated as a new generation co-operative in December to market human and pet health care products containing elk velvet antler and a variety of other natural ingredients. The majority of Norelkco's members are also members of the Saskatchewan Elk Breeders Association.

Norelkco is targeting a number of different markets, but its primary division is the VetPro Naturals line, which produces seven products that are sold exclusively to veterinary clinics across Canada.

What pleases Altrogge the most about the new company is that it is a homegrown solution to the challenges facing the elk industry.

"I like it when producers get together and form a company that doesn't just sell raw materials, but is also involved in producing, processing, distributing and marketing the product," he says. "Retailing is where the profits are made, and with the new generation co-op, we hope that all revenue from all the different stages will be returned to the producers. That is what is so exciting about our VetPro line."

Saskatchewan elk producers had built a lucrative industry supplying velvet antler to the Asian traditional medicine market, but this came to an end in December 2000, when the Republic of Korea banned imports of all North American velvet antler after the discovery of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in the North American farmed elk herd. Since then, the price of antler velvet has dropped from \$45 per pound in 2000 to \$8 per pound in 2005. Elk farms in Saskatchewan now follow a mandatory CWD surveillance program and have done extensive testing, but the Asian markets have not yet returned. Norelkco's goal is to develop new North American markets, first in pet care and then in human health supplements.

"Our product line is very unique in the sense that we had a veterinary consultant formulate our product line," says Altrogge. "All our products contain elk velvet but they also contain a variety of natural ingredients to remedy specific pet ailments. Our star

product is VetPro Naturals Joint Plus, and we have high hopes for its sales potential. In addition to the velvet antler, it contains collagen 2, nettle leaf and horsetail, all of which are known to help in joint regeneration for arthritic dogs. It will be available only at veterinary clinics across Canada."

Altroggi now plans to focus on developing the brand name and the company's image.

"We will be providing the clinics with lots of valuable information about our products. We want to convey the idea that we are a reliable company that can supply the product at a good price, and provide lots of support for vets who have questions."

For more information, contact:

David Altrogge, Marketing Manager
Norelco Nutraceuticals
Innovation Place
102 - 116 Research Drive
Saskatoon, Sask.
(306) 384-1888
www.norelco.com

Table of Contents

Week of May 8, 2006

RESEARCHER LOOKS FOR WAYS TO IMPROVE EFFICIENCY OF STARTER FERTILIZER

How much is too much, or not enough?

That is just one of the questions Jeff Schoenau of the Department of Crop Science at the University of Saskatchewan will attempt to answer as part of a Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food (SAF) Agriculture Development Fund (ADF) project (#20050725) over the next few months.

"With the move toward low-disturbance seeding systems, there is a limit to how much phosphorous (P) and potassium (K) fertilizer can be safely put down in the seed row as a starter," he says. "If you want to disturb the soil less during the seeding operation, you have to use narrow openers, and that, coupled with the wide row spacing, means that the seed and fertilizer get crammed together, which increases the likelihood of fertilizer burn."

Given the move to fertilizing in a single pass using low-disturbance openers, Schoenau says there is a need to re-evaluate safe rates of starter fertilizer, which are placed in or near the seed row so that the seedlings get easy access to nutrients like phosphorus and potassium that are immobile in the soil. Because phosphorous and potassium cannot move very far through the soil, they have to be placed very near the seeds for the seedlings to derive any nutrient benefits. This lack of mobility also increases the potential for damage from an over-application of fertilizer, because the nutrients cannot dissipate in the soil.

"So what we are doing," he says, "is to look at safe rates of combined, seed-placed phosphorus and potassium applications using these low-disturbance seeding-fertilizing configurations. We are also looking at the effectiveness of a new controlled-release phosphorus (CRP) fertilizer product, which has a special coating that controls the release of the nutrients into the soil water."

One of the potential advantages of CRP, explains Schoenau, is that farmers might be able to safely place higher rates of fertilizer phosphorus in the seed row.

"If you have a recommendation for a high rate of phosphorus, and you have a sensitive crop and a seeding unit that has low seed-bed utilization, you may damage the crop if you try to place all the phosphorus with the seed in the seed row. CRP may overcome this limitation by allowing all the recommended P fertilizer to be safely placed in the seed row. As a secondary benefit, the slow release nature of CRP could improve the crop utilization and efficiency of uptake."

So far, research is showing that CRP allows higher rates of fertilizer application in the seed row. Further research is planned into the actual affect of CRP on crop uptake, as well as on P and K combinations.

This is a one-year project. Schoenau hopes that, by late-December, he will have a good idea of how the starter fertilizers affect the safety of crops when placed in the seed row, and also, how they affect the availability and crop utilization of

phosphorus.

For more information, contact:

Jeff Schoenau, Ph.D
Department of Soil Science
University of Saskatchewan
(306) 966-6844

[Table of Contents](#)

Week of May 8, 2006

TRACE MINERAL SUPPLEMENTATION FOR SUMMER GRAZING

As cattle producers look ahead to placing their cows on to summer pasture, ensuring that these cows receive a proper supply of minerals throughout the summer grazing period is important, according to Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food Livestock Development Specialist Bryan Doig.

"A large number of pastures in the province are commonly deficient in trace minerals," he says. "In addition to iodine and cobalt, copper, zinc and manganese are three of the trace minerals of which cattle are often deficient."

Selenium deficiency problems are also common, especially in the black, thin-black, brown and grey-wooded soil zones, Doig says.

"Copper deficiency due to low copper levels in the forage is compounded when there are high levels of the mineral molybdenum in the feed and/or high levels of sulfates and iron in the water source or feed. The molybdenum, sulfates and iron act like a magnet in the cow's rumen, attracting most of the available copper in the feed and causing it to pass through the animal rather than being absorbed by the body. This can cause a number of problems, including low rates of conception."

The easiest method of providing adequate amounts of trace minerals to cattle on summer pasture is to feed the minerals as a supplement. Salt, minerals or a combination of salt and minerals, which contains a balance of trace minerals, can provide proper supplementation to grazing animals. Supplying a trace mineralized fortified salt (TM fortified salt) is a convenient method of providing trace minerals. Cattle tend to seek out salt and will almost always eat it every day, he explains. Blue salt blocks contain salt, cobalt and iodine. TM fortified salt blocks (brown blocks) contain salt, cobalt and iodine, as well as copper, zinc, manganese and sometimes selenium.

"Providing a range mineral—a mix of calcium and phosphorus—which often contains salt, encourages intake by cattle on pasture," says Doig. Another option is to mix loose, TM fortified salt with a salt-free cattle mineral supplement to encourage intake. A common mixture is one part TM fortified salt to two parts salt-free mineral."

Doig warns that all salt blocks must be removed from the pasture for this method to work. Ensure that both the salt and mineral contain adequate levels of the trace minerals. Look for products containing at least 2,500 mg/kg of copper. The levels of zinc and manganese are usually balanced with the copper.

"If selenium deficiencies are common in your area, select a TM fortified salt with added selenium. Mineral supplements may also contain selenium. Be careful, though. Product labels caution to supply selenium from one source only. Selenium is extremely toxic, and the effects of over-supplementation are as bad—if not worse—than a selenium deficiency."

Additional information on trace minerals is available in the publication Trace Minerals for Beef Cattle on the Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food website at www.agr.gov.sk.ca under the sub-headings Beef, Feeds and Nutrition.

To find out more, contact the Agriculture Knowledge Centre at: 1-800-457-2377.

Bryan Doig
Livestock Development Specialist
Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food

North Battleford
(306) 446-7477

[Table of Contents](#)

Week of May 8, 2006

REMINDERS AND TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL FORAGE CROP ESTABLISHMENT

The precautions you take to foster the establishment of your forage crop can go a long way to ensuring you reap the rewards of your investment of time and money, according to Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food (SAF) Forage Conversion Specialist André Bonneau. It is often a matter of dosage.

"For instance, cover crops are not necessary for good forage crop establishment, but are often used because they provide a cash return, hay or pasture and weed suppression. During establishment, some forage crops can compete better than others with cover crops. Wheat grasses, brome grasses, alfalfa and sweet clover are reasonably competitive under normal conditions. Russian wild rye, bird's foot trefoil and sainfoin are less competitive, and should be seeded only on clean land without a cover crop."

If you use a cover crop, Bonneau advises reducing the normal seeding rate by 50 per cent to reduce competition.

"Quite often, seeding the cover crop at 50 per cent of normal will not drastically reduce the yield of the cover crop for greenfeed," he explains. "Seed both crops at right angles, if possible. This takes two operations, which many producers do not like, but it does ensure the forage crop can be seeded shallowly, and avoids direct competition with the cover crop within the rows."

Seed the cover crop first. If you are seeding fluffy grasses that do not flow well through your seeder, consider adding up to 20 lb. of actual high phosphate fertilizer per acre in a six-inch row spacing. However, avoid contact between nitrogen and potassium fertilizers and the seed. In a grass/alfalfa mixture, mix the alfalfa seed and the fertilizer immediately before seeding. Increase the recommended alfalfa inoculant rate before seeding and use a sticker solution. Consider re-inoculating pre-inoculated seed before mixing it with fertilizer.

Herbicide residues are another factor to consider.

"Most herbicides—if applied properly—do not affect the development of the crops that follow," he says. "There are a few herbicides that leave residues in the soil and which carry recropping restrictions."

More information on herbicide re-cropping restrictions is available in the 2006 Guide to Crop Protection published by SAF, which may be downloaded from the SAF website at: <http://www.agr.gov.sk.ca/docs/crops/cropguide00.asp>

For more information, contact:

André Bonneau
Forage Conversion Specialist
Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food
1-866-457-2377 (toll free)

[Table of Contents](#)

Week of May 8, 2006

SAF FORAGE SPECIALIST WINS RANGE MANAGEMENT AWARD

Michel Tremblay, Provincial Forage Crop Specialist with Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food recently received the Society for Range Management (SRM) Outstanding Achievement Award. SRM is dedicated to the conservation and sustainable management of rangelands for the benefit of current and future generations.

Also receiving the award were Ted and Olive Perrin of Beechy. The couple owns and operates the 12,775-acre Castleland Ranch in the northern mixed prairie region. The official citation mentions how Castleland Ranch is a leader in range

management in the Canadian ranching industry.

"Forward thinking and conservative range management on Castleland Ranch ensures sustainable grazing resources through extremes in climatic conditions over the short- and long-term. Many of the long-standing management approaches of Castleland Ranch are new technology for many producers," according to the SRM.

Tremblay and the Perrins accepted their awards at the SRM convention in Vancouver. SRM has about 4,000 members worldwide who deal with natural resource management and range ecology. SRM award recipients may or may not be SRM members, but they will have had a significant impact on the advancement of applied ecology on rangelands.

Tremblay is a native of the Saskatoon area. He developed an interest in rangelands as a result of his farm upbringing.

"We were concerned with the level of soil erosion occurring with the farming practices prevalent at the time," he says. "Seeding light land to forages was a bit of a conservation ethic for our family. We gained much appreciation for the landscape, and for the value of rangelands. Conservation of rangelands is good for the environment."

Tremblay worked at the Saskatchewan Forage Council for a few years. He joined Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food as a Provincial Forage Specialist in December 1992.

Tremblay finds the Society for Range Management a useful resource for him.

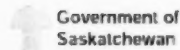
"The society gives you a professional network. You become aware of what other people are working on, and you draw on that to solve problems in your own jurisdiction."

There are between 10 and 12 million acres of rangeland in Saskatchewan. There is also a large acreage base of introduced forages that has grown steadily in recent years, Tremblay points out.

"That part of the industry expands, but rangeland is a finite resource because you can't create rangeland. Restoration of broken rangeland is very difficult. This is why we should manage it with a little bit of wisdom," he concludes.

For more information, contact:

Michel Tremblay
Forage Crops Provincial Specialist
Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food
(306) 787-7712



3085 Albert Street, Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada S4S 0B1

Phone: (306) 787-5140

© 2007 Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food.

Canada